Sabbati, 12. die Aprilis, 1679.

ORDERED,

THAT the thanks of this Houſe be returned to Mr. Jane *for his Sermon Yeſterday Preached before this Houſe; and that he be deſired to Print his Sermon. And that the Members that ſerve for the Univerſities do return the thanks.*

WILL. GOLDESBROUGH.

Cler. Dom. Com.

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2.

A

SERMON

Preached on the Day of the

Publick Fast,

April the 11th. 1679.

AT

St. *Margarets Westminster*;

BEFORE THE

Honourable House of Commons.

BY

WILLIAM JANE, B. D.

Canon of Christ-Church in *Oxford*, and
Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of *London*.

LONDON:

Printed by *M. C.* for *Henry Brome*, and *Richard Chiswel*, in St. *Pauls* Church-Yard. 1679.

A SERMON ON

HOSEAH vii. 9.

Strangers have devoured his ſtrength and he knoweth it not, yea gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

THE Argument of this Chapter is much of the ſame nature with the foregoing, only with this difference, that in that the Prophet directs his ſpeech againſt *Judah*, in this againſt the Ten Tribes. And becauſe in the end of the former Chapter he had given the Jews ſome hopes of their return from Captivity, he proceeds in this, and thoſe which follow to lay open the ſins, and aggravate the guilt of the people of *Iſrael*, and

thereby to cut off from them all occasion of complaining against God, as if he had adjudged them to too severe a doom in not affording them the like promise of a Temporal restitution.

He makes a distinct discovery of the sins and provocations of all orders and degrees of men amongst them, not only of the common people but of the Princes and the Rulers, not only of the lesser and inferior Cities, but (and that principally) of *Samaria* the great Metropolis of their Nation. And this seems to be the design of the Prophet in almost every Verse of this Chapter: First, to lay before them the sad calamitous condition whereto their sins had brought them: Secondly, their senselesness and stupidity which increased upon them in proportion to their miseries, and grew the more incurable by the methods of their recovery.

Thus we read Verse 7. *They have devoured their Judges, all their Kings are fallen, there is none among them that calleth unto me.* By which words, as I conjecture, the Prophet endeavours to represent to them those Treasons and Conspiracies, and horrible Butcheries of the Kings of *Israel*, which are more particularly described, 2 *Kings* xv. and which at last determined in the utter destruction of their Kingdom.

And yet notwithstanding the posture of their affairs was so dismal and amazing, though there appeared

appeared among them such visible tokens of the Divine vengeance in so many revolutions of their Government, so many changes of their Kings, who all succeeded one another by Sedition, Treachery and Murther, yet (which is the more dreadful prospect of the two) there was no man among them so far wrought upon by the sense of the publick calamities as to humble himself before God, to reform his life, or to implore the Divine assistance for repairing the breaches, and restoring Peace, and settlement to a perishing and distracted people. The like argument with some variety of expression is again repeated in the words of my Text. In which we find represented to us,

I. The misery of *Ephraims* Captivity, *strangers have devoured his strength.* By strength here we may understand first that which the Wise man calls *a Defence, a High-wall, and a strong City*, the Wealth, Treasure and Riches of a people. And how far this had been impaired together with the occasions of it, we have a very large account from the xiii. to the xvii. of 2 *Kings*. Under *Jehoahaz* the son of *Jehu* they were so *threshed*, and worn out by the King of *Syria*, that there *remained to* Jehoahaz *of all the people but fifty Horsemen, ten Chariots, and ten thousand Foot.* And though afterwards under *Jeroboam* there began to appear some glimps of settlement and restauration,

Prov. xviii. 11.

Eccl. vii. 12.

2 Kings xiii. 7.

tion,

tion, yet these glorious hopes were soon defeated by the Invasion of *Pul* the King of *Assyria*, who forced *Menahem* the King of *Israel* to a composi-
xv. 19. tion of a thousand Talents of Silver, *that so his hand might be with him to confirm the Kingdom in his hand.* And in this state they continued wasting
xvii. 3. and consuming till the coming of *Salmanasser*, who like an insatiable gulph devoured and exhausted all.

Or, II. By strength here may be understood that wherein the true safety of a Nation doth consist, which is the Divine Providence, and Protection. Without this the Fortifications of Cities, the Courage of Souldiers, the multitude of Counsellors, the vastness of Revenues are of no avail at all to the defence and security of a people. For when ever God withdraws his presence and favour from a Nation, he dismantles
Isaiah xix. 3. their Fortresses, *mingles a perverse spirit in the midst of their Counsels, makes the heart of a people to melt, and their spirit to fail within them,* he curses the Treasures of the wicked, and makes the *increase*
Job xx. 28. *of his house to depart and flow away.*

And as *Ephraims* strength in the former acception had been devoured by strange men, so in this
2 King. xvii. 12. by strange gods. For *they served Idols of which the Lord had said unto them, ye shall not do this thing.* And what more likely course could they have taken to cut off all their claim and interest

in

in the Divine favour? *They choſe new gods, then was war in the gates.* Jud. v. 8.

And ſurely for the people of *Iſrael*, to whom God had made ſuch clear Revelations of himſelf, and by ſo many repeated experiments of his love, an earneſt of his aſſiſtance, while they continued ſtedfaſt in his Covenant; for them I ſay thus in a plain defiance to their known duty, to forſake the Lord who brought them out of *Ægypt*, and to fly for refuge to the gods of the Nations; what is this but to diſtruſt the veracity of Heaven, and ſcorn the Protection of an Omnipotent Arm, to renounce the Covenant which had Eſpouſed them to their Maker, and conſequently to proclaim a war with the Sovereign of the world? What in all likelihood can be the conſequence of ſuch a daring heinous provocation but what we read, 2 *Kings* xvii. 20. *Therefore the Lord rejected all the ſeed of* Iſrael, *and afflicted them and delivered them into the hand of Spoilers, until he had caſt them out of his ſight.* This then is the miſery of *Ephraims* Captivity, *ſtrangers have devoured his ſtrength.*

II. We have the ſymptoms of his approaching ruin, *Gray hairs are here and there upon him.* Gray hairs may denote either the intenſion and greatneſs, or elſe the duration of his Calamity. And in either ſignification the meaning of the expreſſion will amount to this, that the people of

Israel had been so long kept under a continued series of pressures and afflictions, that they were in a manner worn out with old Age, ready to give up the Ghost, and to pine away in their Calamities; there appeared upon them the constant forerunners and manifest presages of ruin and desolation.

And whenever God decrees the final consumption of a people, they may foresee it themselves without the prediction of a Prophet. A general dissoluteness of manners, an impudent boldness in the practice of iniquity, a neglect and contempt of all the duties of Religion, the loosing the joints of Government by Treasons and Conspiracies, divided interests and Dissensions among the people, Confusions and Divisions in the Church are as infallible symptoms of a dying State, of the dissolution of a Common-wealth and the funeral of a Kingdom, as if a flaming Sword had hung over it, or a voice from Heaven had revealed its doom. These are the gray hairs of the people in the Text. And how near we our selves resemble them, I leave you to judg by comparing our condition at present with that of the Ten Tribes before their carrying into Captivity.

But III. Which is the worst symptom of all, here is described the general senselesness of that people, notwithstanding all the judgments of God either

either past or present, a deep sleep that had seized them (like *Jonah* in the Tempest) none awakening himself to cry unto God, or to pour out his supplications at the Throne of Grace. *This is his condition, yet he knoweth it not* (that is) he does not consider the greatness of his danger, or he does not discover himself to be seriously affected with the sense of Gods judgments, so as to lament, and bewail, and to tremble at them; he does not resolve them into their proper principles, nor acknowledg the Author of them, which was the hand of God, nor the Impulsive cause which was his own iniquity: or lastly he knoweth it not, that is, he does not comply with the end and design of it. Afflictions have not that errand upon him for which they were sent, but he so behaves himself under them, as if he had been wholly ignorant what had been done unto him.

From the words thus explained, I shall consider,

I. The end and design of Gods judgments upon a Nation, which is, that they may know and consider, that they may be brought to a sense of their sins, to true Repentance and amendment of their lives.

II. The contrary effects which they often have upon a secure and a sinful people, which is to make them the more incorrigible and obsti-

nate in their sins. Gods judgments are upon him, *yet he knoweth it not.*

III. I shall discover some Causes of it.

IV. The greatness of the provocation, *Yet he knoweth it not*: This *Yet* hath an Emphasis, an accent upon it, and denotes sins under judgments to be *exceeding sinful.*

V. And lastly, I shall conclude with some brief Application to our selves. I begin with the first of these which is the end and design of Gods judgments upon a Nation, which is that they may know, &c.

And this will appear, 1. From the intention of God in the threatning and inflicting of his judgments. 2. From the natural tendency of the judgments themselves. God not only threatens but sends his judgments upon a people on the same errand as the Antient *Romans* did their Heralds, before they actually entered upon a war, not peremptorily to declare our doom but to warn us to prevent it by coming in and submitting to terms of Peace and Reconcilement.

Jer. xviii. 7, 8. *At what instant*, says God by the Prophet *Jeremy*, *I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it, if that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from the evil, I will repent of the evil which I thought to do unto them.* In the xxvi. of *Leviticus*, God in a Prophetical Scheme represents the sorest judg-

judgments which were to fall upon his people in succeeding Generations, he lays before their eyes the Sword, Pestilence and Famine, expulsion from the Lords Land into a Land of Enemies and Idols, the ceasing of the Sacrifices and the solemn Festivals, and even all the utmost miseries of Captivity and Desolation; and yet in the conclusion of that black Catalogue, which seems rather an inventory of what evils the hand of God was able to inflict, than what a people should suffer, we have room for Repentance and a reserve of mercy, Verse 41. *If then their Uncircumcised hearts be humbled and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my Covenant with* Jacob, *and also my Covenant with* Isaac, *and also my Covenant with* Abraham *will I remember, and I will remember the Land.*

We read in *Joel* ii. of a day of darkness and gloominess, *such as had never been the like before,* Joel ii. 2. *neither should there be any after it*; such Armies and 10. terrors, *as should make the earth quake, the Heavens tremble, the Sun and Moon to grow dark, and the Stars to withdraw their shining.* And yet amidst all this distress and perplexity the Lord calls upon his people to return unto him, with an intimation likewise given that *he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him.* 14.

Gods wrath was never so fiercely kindled against a person or a people, but if true Repentance

tance intervened, it has removed his hand or at leaſt abated the fierceneſs of the blow. Nay the outward and formal humiliation of an *Ahab* has procured a reprieve, and ſuſpended the execution. It cannot be denyed but that God ſometimes puniſhes a people in vengeance without any mixture or allay of mercy, when he makes a full end of them, and the conſumption overflows in judgment, as in the Caſe of the Ten Tribes under *Salmanaſſer*, of the *Jewiſh* Church at the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, when the Kingdom of God was taken from them, *and wrath came upon them to the uttermoſt*; of the ſeven Churches of *Aſia*, who have had their Candleſtick removed, and been ſwallowed up by the Inundation of *Mahumetaniſm*; of the famous Churches of *Africa*, which once gave light to the whole Chriſtian world, now overſpred with ignorance and Barbariſm, with a thick *darkneſs that may be felt*. But in all theſe Caſes God never proceeds to exciſion and caſting off, till all his other corrections have proved uſeleſs and ineffectual, till their iniquities are full, till they are ripe for vengeance, till they have neglected all the ſeaſons of Grace, and out-ſinned the day of their viſitation. Then indeed God grows weary of repenting being preſt with *ſin as a Cart full of ſheaves*.

1 Kings xxi. 29.

2 Theſ. ii. 16.

This is the account which the Scripture gives us of the people of *Judah* when they were carried

ed into Captivity, they *mocked the meſſengers of God, deſpiſed his word, and miſuſed his Prophets until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy, therefore he brought upon them the King of the* Chaldees, *&c.* This is a Courſe which God then only takes when all other remedies fail. But till then he has mercy in ſtore for a ſinful people even in the midſt of all his ſevereſt diſpenſations. God ſhoots out his Arrows againſt a Land as *Jonathan* ſhot to *David*, with Letters bound about them, not to deſtroy but to inſtruct. As *Gideon* when he vext the men of *Succoth*, is ſaid to *teach* them (or to make them to know) though *with the briers and thorns of the wilderneſs*. Gods *Rod* has a *voice* as well as a *ſmart*, and if we *hear* the one we may eſcape the other.

2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17.

1 Sam. xx. 21.

Jud. viii. 16. Mic. vi. 9.

And upon theſe grounds we may aſſure ourſelves that in this day of the Lords anger, of confuſion and rebuke, which now lies upon this ſinful Land of our Nativity, the Lord has not given over all concern for our peace and ſettlement. He waits that he may be gracious and ſtands ready to recal his judgments, as ſoon as we ſhall be contented to be ſaved, to accept of a deliverance. The Lord looks down from Heaven this day to take notice of our behaviour under his afflicting hand, how far we are advanced in the practice of Repentance which this day he ſo loudly

loudly calls for. There is not a penitent tear, not a devout sigh, not a mourner in secret for them who have no compassion on themselves, nay not a person swearing and revelling, eating flesh and drinking wine in this *day when the Lord calls us to weeping, fasting and mourning*, but the Lord observes it, and lays it to the account of this Nation as well on the one side for the engagement of his mercy, as on the other for the provocation of the fierceness of his anger.

Tis not our utter ruin, that the Lord aims at. For *what profit is there in our blood?* He hath set his judgments, as he once did his Prophet, over Kingdoms and over Nations, not barely *to root*
Jer. i. 10. *out, and destroy, but to build and to plant*, and these judicial proceedings of his are directed to edification, not primarily to destruction. They are what the Censures of the Church ought to be, severe in the execution, but salutary in the event,
1 Cor. v. 5. delivering up the offender to the *punishment of the flesh*, that so by Repentance and amendment thereupon probably ensuing *the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord*. Lo all these things *worketh*
Job xxxiii. 29. *God oftentimes with man to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.* And God often visits iniquity with Rods, when he will not utterly take away his loving kindness from a people.

But

But, II. This will further and more distinctly appear from the natural tendency of Gods judgments themselves. Which will plainly appear in these following particulars.

I. Then they have a natural tendency to work in men a sense and acknowledgment of their sins. Prosperity is apt to administer such abundant variety of fresh delights and satisfactions to the fancy, that the soul is never at leisure to retire into it self and take a true estimate of its own Estate and Constitution. The world will never be wanting to present the man with baits and allurements, and external objects to employ his thoughts and gratifie his desires. And so by what means he is enabled for a time to suppress the voice of Conscience, and drown the cries of a wounded Spirit. As the *Jews* when they sacrificed their children to *Moloch*, had their loud Instruments of Musick, lest they should perchance hear the out-cries of their perishing Infants, which might force their obdurate hearts into tender and compassionate resentments.

But when the hand of God over-reaches him, and affliction sits close upon him, this embitters his delights, damps his jollity, dissolves the curious Fabric of his imaginary enjoyments, renders all his most exquisite pleasures toothless and insipid. None of these things can then stand by him to rescue him from his miseries, or give any

ſweetning to the bitterneſs of his Cup. And thus when God hedges up his way with thorns, and ſtops him in the purſuit of his brutiſh and ſenſual ſatisfactions, then there lies a neceſſity upon him to deſcend into himſelf, when he cannot look abroad, to turn his eyes inward, to take an exact view of his own heart, and diſcover the greatneſs of his iniquity: When he is once *bound in fetters, and holden in the Cords of affliction, then will he ſee his work, and his trangreſſions that they have exceeded.* For the mind of man is active, and reſtleſs, it will always be employed one way or other. And when it has no outward objects to exerciſe, or divert it, then ſelf-reflexion takes place, and the voice of Conſcience will be heard.

Job xxxvi. 8, 9.

How ſtupid and ſenſeleſs was *Pharaoh* before Gods judgments fell upon him! He has no ſenſe at all of God or a Providence, of ſin or the wages of it. *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let* Iſrael *go.* But when the Lord ſent thunder and hail, *and the fire ran along upon the ground,* his ſtomach comes down, his proud heart is a little humbled, the voice of God in the thunder is more effectual, than by his Prophet. For then *Pharaoh* ſent and called for *Moſes* and *Aaron* and ſaid unto them, *I have ſinned this time, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* Now therefore *intreat*

Exod. v. 2.

ix. 23.

xxvii. 28.

the

the Lord, that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

When *Belshazzar* sees the hand-writing upon the wall, *his countenance is changed, his thoughts trouble him, the joynts of his Loins are loosed, and his Knees smite one against another.* Dan. v. 6.

And let *Nebuchadnezzar* be never so puissant in defying the threats, and the Omnipotence of God, yet that sad calamity of eating grass with the beasts of the field will bring him upon his knees, and force him to acknowledg, *that the inhabitants of the world are reputed as nothing in comparison of God, and that as he doth according to his will in the Armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, so none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?* iv. 35. The wound of Conscience is not perceived at first any more than a wound in the body, as long as the man continues in the same briskness of motion, which he was in, when he first received it. But when the judgments of God stop him in his career, force him to sit down and rest himself a little, he then begins to cool, and consider, to feel his wound, and recover the unwelcome sense of the extremity of his pain.

2. The judgments of God are in their own nature apt to take us off from Carnal confidence and security, and to fix us in a closer dependence upon God. When mens *houses are safe from fear, nei-* Jo2 xxi. 9.

ther is the rod of God upon them, they are apt to say to
14. the Almighty *Depart from us*, to center in themselves, and ascribe their prosperity to their own
Hab. i. 16. conduct and contrivance. When *their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous, then they sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their drag.* It is a great vanity in a manner rooted in the nature of mankind, to affect an absoluteness and sufficiency in themselves, and an independence upon any superior Cause. They think it too great a disparagement to them, an upbraiding of their weakness (as if they were unable to help themselves) to be a burden to Providence, and live in a precarious dependence upon him that made them. And therefore so long as succor and relief can be expected from Power or Policy, from Horses or Horsemen, from any thing within them or about them, from Foreign Interests, Domestic Treasures, or even Idolatrous compliances, they will keep their distance, stand at defiance with the Almighty, and never think of placing their trust upon the *hope of* Israel, upon him who is
Jer. xiv. 8. *the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them*
Psal. lxv. 5. *that remain in the broad sea.*

Jeroboam was sensible enough, that the Law of God would not countenance his usurpation, and thereupon sets himself to contrive how he might live without him, and stand in no need of the influence of his Providence. He makes two

Calves

Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and then grows confident and ſecure, that the *work of his hands* would Eſtabliſh him in his Throne. And therefore God Almighty often finds it neceſſary to fruſtrate the Counſels, blaſt the deſigns, and curſe the Policies and attempts of all ſuch as uſurp upon his Prerogative, and aſpire to an abſolute Sovereignty of their own. He takes off *Pharaohs* Chariot-wheels, puts a hook into the noſe of *Sennacherib*, cruſhes the impious Politician upon the very brink of his deſigns, *diſappoints the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterprize.* This is *dignus vindice nodus*, he is as it were concerned in point of honor to vindicate his Authority and government, to make them know that they are but men, and *that the moſt high ruleth over all.* He cuts off all their Proviſions at home, and ſtops all ſuccors from abroad, diſtreſſes them on every ſide, that ſo he may convince them of the vanity and madneſs of their preſumption, that he is a refuge when all elſe fails, and that there is no Sanctuary but in his protection. We read in the xxxiii. of *Ezekiel* of a very ſevere threatning of miſery and deſolation, Verſe 28. *I will lay the Land moſt deſolate, and the pomp of her ſtrength ſhall ceaſe*, &c. And the reſult and iſſue of this ſeverity is mentioned, Verſe 29. *Then ſhall they know that I am the Lord.* The ſame is aſſigned for the end and reaſon of Gods judgments

Exod. xiv. 25.

2 King. xix. 28.

Job v. 12.

Ezekiel xxxiii.

in

in ſeveral other places of this Prophecy, *that they*
vii. 27. *may know that I am the Lord.* As if it were ſuch a
xxiv. 24. xxx. 8. difficult matter for a people to know, and to truſt in God, till all other ſupport were taken from them, till they had nothing left to lean upon of their own.

Hoſ. v. 13. When Ephraim *ſaw his ſickneſs, and Judah his wound, then went* Ephraim *to the* Aſſyrian, *and ſent to King* Jareb, *Menahem* makes a Confederacy
2 Kings xv. 16. with *Pul.* *Hoſea* gives preſents to *Shalmaneſer*, and *Ahaz* ſends an Embaſſy to *Tiglath-pileſer*, and
xvii. 3. 2 Chronicl. xxviii. 20. ſacrifices to the gods of *Damaſcus.* But alas while they endeavored to avoid the ſmoak they fell into the fire. Theſe were ſo far from *curing of their wound* that they both made it deeper, and encreaſed the ſmart of it. And the gods which *Ahaz*
23. went unto for ſuccor, proved *the ruin of him and of all* Iſrael.

But when God takes the matter into his own hands, becomes a *Lion both to* Ephraim *and* Judah, blocks up all their paſſages, leaves no way open to *Ægypt* or *Aſſyria*, to Idols or Confederates, they then begin to think of returning unto God. *In*
Hoſ. v. 15. *their affliction they will ſeek me early.*

III. The Judgments of God upon a Nation conduce very much to take us off from too great an over-valuing of the Honors, Riches, and Pleaſures of this world. Though ordinarily in our ſober judgments we ſet a greater value upon the ever-

everlaſting concerns of another world, than upon all the ſplendid gayeties, and delights of this, yet they lie under this great diſadvantage, that they are future and at a diſtance, and by that means unable to make ſo deep an impreſſion upon the mind as theſe temporal enjoyments, which are preſent and continually in our eye. And this makes moſt men ſo very fond of the world, ſo eagerly deſirous of building Tabernacles here, and ſtrangely indiſpoſed to ſeek a *better Country*, to reach after *their everlaſting hope*, and the *price of their high calling*.

But when God Almighty in the courſe of his Providence ſends his judgments and calamities upon a people, deveſts them of their poſſeſſions, degrades them from their honors, puts a fatal period to their choiceſt pleaſures; How effectually muſt this needs convince us of the tranſitory and periſhable nature of all creature enjoyments, and ſtrip them of thoſe deceitful diſguiſes, under which a deluded fancy is ſo apt to repreſent them!

When *Baruch* was ſent upon a meſſage, which he fore-ſaw was likely to abridg him of ſome of his former ſatisfactions, he grows melancholy and diſconſolate at the news, and cries out, *Wo is me, for the Lord hath added grief unto my ſorrow, I fainted in my ſighing and find no reſt.* But *thus ſhalt thou ſay unto him* (ſaith God by the Prophet *Jeremy*)

Jer. xlv. 3,4. *Jeremy*) *the Lord ſaith thus, Behold that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land, and ſeekeſt thou great things for thy ſelf? ſeek them not.* As if he ſhould have ſaid, Wouldſt thou live at eaſe in *Sion*, when *Sion* is to be Plowed like a field, and *Jeruſalem* to become a deſolation? Wouldſt thou ſwim in affluence, and enjoy thy pleaſures in a Land now ready to be overſpread with Plagues and Vengeance? Wouldſt thou build thee a ſtately Palace over the blood and bones of thy ſlaughtered brethren? What preferment canſt thou promiſe to thy ſelf in the ruines of thy Country? Wouldſt thou make a purchaſe when the world is at an end?

Ludicra ergò publica Trever petis?

It was *Salvians* expoſtulation with the Citizens of *Treves*, when immediately after the ſacking of their City, they petitioned their Magiſtrates that the Stage-Plays might be reſtored. In like manner does *Jeremy* here control *Baruch* for his now unſeaſonable deſires. And may not the ſame ſerve as a check to thoſe amongſt us, who in ſuch times as theſe are ſcraping up all that they can lay hands on, making all the ſordid advantages of the world that they can, as tenants do of an Eſtate, when their Leaſe is expiring. *Soul, take thine eaſe* (ſaid the rich fool in the Goſpel) *thou haſt goods laid up for many years, eat, drink and be merry.*

Bu

But surely he had quite other apprehensions, when he heard that dismal and surprizing voice, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.*

IV. The judgments of God upon a people are apt to unite their hearts in Love and Charity to one another. When men *are at ease in* Sion, *and trust in the mountains of* Samaria, When *they lie upon beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stall*; When *they chant to the Viol*, live merry, and are full, as they are described, *Amos* vi. It immediately follows, that then *they are not grieved for the afflictions of* Joseph. But when we begin to have a sense and feeling of Gods judgments upon our selves, this must needs (one would think) forcibly engage us to Charity and Compassion to our Brethren. We shall be sure to *remember those that are in bonds*, when we our selves *are bound with them*, and to help those that are in adversity, when we find that we also are *but flesh*. Amos vi. 1. 4. 6.

That which hastned, and precipitated the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and made their final ruin, the more dreadful when it came, was the factions, and animosities which at that time broke forth among them, which engaged them in such incredible slaughters and murders of one another, that they never put themselves into a posture of resisting the *Romans*, but when they saw

them approaching their Walls. Which they did *then*, lest their enemies should come and take the work out of their hands, and so deprive them of being the sole Authors of their own destruction.

And this I think to be the saddest symptom of approaching vengeance, which is this day visible upon this sinful Nation.

The modern *Romans* can hardly in all probability ever enter in upon us, but at that door, which we our selves set open by our wide breaches and divisions. And O that we could all be effectually perswaded in this our day, to know the things that belong unto peace before they be hid from our eyes, to lay aside all names of parties and distinctions, and mind the true interest of the *Protestant* Religion, which now lies at stake, and which I am sure ought to be dearer to us, than all other concernments whatsoever.

It was once the fate of two Reverend Martyrs for the *Protestant* Religion in the time of their prosperity to be uncharitably disunited, and alienated to a greater height in their affections, than in their judgments. But when the fiery trial in *Queen Maries* days (which for the time it lasted, raged more terribly than any of the Heathen Persecutions, except that of *Diocletian*) had so desperately threatned the Common Faith, they

mutu-

mutually condescended, quitted their animosities, and both laid down their lives for their undaunted profession of the Faith of Christ.

And surely this would be one happy effect of the judgments of God upon this Nation, if the fears, which we lie under from our enemies abroad, would engage us to joyn as one man for the composing our differences, and dissensions at home. And unless this be done we have great reason to fear, that God will be so far provoked by our divisions, as to give us up to be united in common sufferings, who would not be perswaded upon any other terms to be reconciled to one another.

Let us consider how the *Romanists* triumph in our quarrels, and how active and industrious they are in fomenting our differences, and adding fuel to our flames. When the Kingdom of *Israel* was divided by the revolt of *Jeroboam*, then was the time for *Shishak* the King of *Egypt* to forrage the Land, and *take away the treasures of the Temple of the Lord.* 2 Chronicl. xii. 9.

And O that God would give us all hearts to consider this, to be sensible of our own interest, and true to it, that so we may no longer expose our selves and our Country, our lives and fortunes, and the best Religion in the world, to the advantages of *blood-thirsty, and deceitful men*, who have at this day conspired against us, *to take*

away both our place and Nation. And aſſure your ſelves (for he who is truth it ſelf hath ſpoken it) *that a Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf cannot ſtand, but is brought to deſolation.* And while *Ephraim* ſtands *divided againſt* Manaſſeh, *and* Manaſſeh *againſt* Ephraim; *and every one eats the fleſh of his own arm,* and that, at a time *when the* Syrian *is before and the* Philiſtim *behind, and both ready to devour* Iſrael *with open mouth,* we have good reaſon to conclude that *through the wrath of the Lord the Land is darkned,* and infatuated, that *gods anger is not yet turned away, but that his hand is ſtretched out ſtill.*

Iſa. ix. 12. 19, 20, 21.

Theſe are ſome of thoſe ends for which Almighty God ſends his judgments upon a Nation. I proceed in the next place to ſhew

II. The contrary effects which they often have upon a ſecure and a ſinful people, which is to make them the more incorrigible, and obſtinate in their ſins. And here we meet with ſome who grow worſe under the rod, though they feel the ſmart of it, yet they will not hear the voice, and as they have heretofore turned Gods Grace, ſo they will now turn his Judgments *into wantonneſs.*

It was a dreadful ſight in the City of *Lyons* when they were ſo infeſted with the Peſtilence, *ut tota civitas buſtum,* that the whole City ſeemed to be but one Grave, the Souldiers in the Garriſon dayly iſſued forth, and committed all ſorts of uncleanneſs

uncleanness with the dying and the dead. The like stupidity we find in *Salvian* charged upon the *Carthaginians*, who were wholly set upon their luxury and intemperance in the midst of their Cities ruines, and among so many deaths, which they daily beheld in the slaughter of their fellow Citizens had no apprehensions of their own.

However they saw Gods hand lifted up to strike, it had no effectual influence upon them *to turn to him that smote them*, unless it were, by the encrease of their provocations, as far as was possible, to smite again. Like those whom we read of, *Revel.* xvi. 11. that *blasphemed the God of Heaven because of their pains*, &c. *Assiduitas calamitatum augmentum Criminum.* A certain argument of the desperate condition of a people, and that they have already begun their *hell*, where at the same time men suffer, and blaspheme their God.

And this was the state, and constitution of the Christian world, at that time when the *Vandals*, *Goths*, and *Hunns*, and other *Barbarians* overran it. So notorious were the Characters of Divine vengeance in the suddenness of their coming, the number of their Armies, and the invincibleness of their strength, that we are forced to leave off all enquiry into second causes and human designs, and conclude them to be nothing else,

but

but (what one of them called himself) the *scourges* in the hand of God to punish a licentious and a back-sliding people. And yet notwithstanding this, they dayly increased in their old sins of Uncleanness, and Adultery, Atheism, and Prophaness, as *Salvian* has left upon Record, who is not half so Tragical in the description of the greatness of their Calamities, as of the iniquities that survived them.

But I shall not proceed any further to seek instances of this, which is so visible in the carriage of Gods own people. Their whole story is one continued Argument to confirm it. They sinned under their suffering, and sinned after they were freed from it. The use, which they made of their afflictions was to grow more obstinate in the sins that caused them. And as soon as they were delivered, they looked upon themselves only as more at liberty to commit all those abominations, for which they were carried into Captivity. Which strange impenitency under Gods judgments does usually manifest itself in these two Cases.

I. When men have hardned themselves in evil by a long practice, and custom of sinning. Custom we say, is a second Nature, and usually gaineth such strength by time, that it grows more firm than either Nature or Religion. It hardens the Heart, sears the Conscience, makes the man uncapable of the impressions of sorrow, and as utterly

terly unable to Repent, as the Æthiopian *to change his skin, or the Leopard to be freed from his ſpots.* The judgments of God may raze the skin, but cannot pierce ſo deep as to wound the Conſcience. Jer. xiii. 23.

It is ſeen ſomtimes in Apoplectick Diſtempers, that they ſo far ſtupifie the Patients, that no ſeverities can reduce them to acts of life, and it is ſaid that they have afterwards grown ſenſible, when they have been laid out, and covered in their Graves, and revived amidſt the flames of their Funeral Pile. In the ſame ſenſeleſs condition does a Cuſtom of ſin place the obdurate ſinner, the auſtereſt of the Divine methods, the Sword, Peſtilence, and Famine, and all the terrible ſymptoms of impendent wrath, ſhall in no wiſe prevail with him to call his ſins to remembrance, or to raiſe him from his drowſineſs and ſtupidity; ſo that he never awakes, till he finds the flames of Hell about his ears, nor recovers the ſenſe of his ſins, till it ſerves to no other purpoſe, but to increaſe the reſentments of his miſery.

The judgments of God quite loſe their end upon ſuch a man. He cries perhaps, and roars under his torments, but he has no apprehenſions of Gods deſign in inflicting them. Like thoſe of whom it is ſaid, *Hoſ.* vii. 14. *They have not cryed unto me with their hearts when they howled upon their beds.*

beds. He has felt the pain and anguish in the flesh, but has no sense at all of any impressions upon the Spirit. Like a man in a melancholic, and a troublesom dream, he is scared perhaps and frighted with the terrors of the Almighty, but as soon as the noise is over, he quickly returns to his former slumber, and security.

This is ordinarily the state of the habitual sinner, placed beyond the possibility of being reclaimed by the Divine corrections, unless God together with his judgments set in with the powerful assistances of his Grace, and Spirit, which that man certainly has little reason to expect, who hath so long grieved, resisted and stood out against it.

And this consideration suggests a second Case, in which the judgments of God usually prove ineffectual to Repentance, when men have continued in their sins under the plentiful dispensations of Grace and Mercy. Abused mercies are the great aggravations of the iniquities of a people. And this we may be sure of, that whatever tends to *fill up the measure* of our sins, increases likewise the difficulty of our Repentance. When *the goodness of God will not lead men to Repentance,*
Rom. ii. 4, 5. when they *despise the riches of his forbearance, and long suffering,* their hearts then grow *hardned, and impenitent, they treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath.*

And

And indeed how can it be expected, that thou shouldst comply with this method of the Almighty, who hast already rejected and refused so many? If the Sword of Gods Judgments had not yet overtaken thee, yet he has been long fighting against thee with the *sword of his mouth*, Rev. ii. 16. with the tenders of his Gospel and the offers of his Grace. He has been long inviting, importuning, and pursuing thee, with the Preaching of his Word, the suggestions of his Spirit, the blood of his Son, the joys of Heaven, and the torments of Hell, thy own vows, engagements, and resolutions. And how can we then think that the showers of Gods judgments should prove more prevalent than the sunshine of his mercies, and out-weigh the united force of all these great inducements to move us unto Repentance?

We have an instance, that speaks home to this, *Luke* xvi. where the Rich man for his impenitence, and neglecting his day of Grace, being tormented in the flames of Hell, desires *Father Abraham* to send *Lazarus* to his five brethren, that survived him, to forewarn them of the consequence of their sins, and what bitterness there is in the end of transgression, lest they should also come *into the same place of torment*. But *Abraham* Luke xvi. 28. tells him *they have* Moses *and the Prophets*, who 29. have clearly revealed their duty, and their danger upon the neglect of it, *let them hear them*. 30.

Nay Father *Abraham*, said he, *But if one went from the dead, they will repent.* And would not any one think, that such a message as this were very likely to produce Repentance? For one coming from the dead would be a visible demonstration of the souls existence after its departure. And *Lazarus* could decipher the joys of Heaven, and give a true account of the sufferings of the damned, as being a person who had a sight of these, a taste and experience of the other. And yet notwithstanding all these high probabilities, of the efficacy of this method, Father *Abraham* concludes, 31. *If they hear not* Moses *and the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded by one coming from the dead.* From which we may infer, applying this parable to our present purpose, that those who are not melted by the offers of his Grace, will be the rather hardned by the terrors of his Judgments, and that such as have rejected those former Mercies, if they will not be perswaded by one coming from the dead, they will surely not Repent, though they themselves are going to them.

These are two Cases in which the impenitency of a people under Gods Judgments usually happens. I proceed now to some more particular Causes of it, which is the next point to be considered.

I. And the first cause is a spirit of Atheism and Infidelity, which has possest the minds of men,

men, which takes their eyes off from God, and fixes them upon ſecond and inferior cauſes. The Plague is nothing elſe but ſome infectious atoms in the air, which in certain determinate periods of time gather together for the annoyance of a City or a Nation. Wars are cauſed meerly by the different intereſts of States, which engage them in mutual provocations of one another, and by that means diſpoſe Princes to Choler and Revenge. The Revolutions of Government proceed from the ambition and treachery of ſubjects, who, whenever they find an opportunity, will be ready to break forth to diſengage themſelves from their ſubjection, and involve a flouriſhing Kindom in blood, ruine, and confuſion. It was *Jorams* deſperate reſolution in the Siege of Samaria, *This evil is of the Lord, wherefore ſhould I wait upon the Lord any longer?* But the men whom we now ſpeak of conclude with a little better Logick, but as bad Divinity, Theſe evils are not from the Lord, therefore why ſhould we wait upon him? It is not *he that has broken us*, neither is it *he, that muſt bind us up.*

It was an error in the Heathens (which their own reaſon might have corrected) that they aſcribed all their ordinary ſucceſs, or misfortune to themſelves, or their enemies, but any great, and extraordinary calamities either to *fate* or *chance*. And this engaged them in a great deal of perplexi-

ty, so that they knew not which way to turn themselves, when difficulties pressed upon them. But methinks those that live in a *Christian* Nation and call themselves *Christians*, should be better taught, who are instructed by the Sacred Oracles to impute all the miseries that befal them to an over-ruling Cause, to discover the *Finger of God* in the hand of an enemy, and ascribe all events whatsoever (even such as are brought upon them by the instrumental mediation of secondary Agents) to the Justice, Wisdom and Providence of God, the Supreme Governour of the World.

2 Sam. xvi. 11. xii. 11. It is the Lord, that bids *Shimei to curse David*, and that raises up to him *enemies out of his own house*.

1 Kings xii. 15. If King *Rehoboam* will not hearken to Faithful Counsel, the *Cause is from the Lord*. And through the *anger of the Lord* it came to pass,

2 Kings xxiv. 20. that *Zedekiah* Rebelled against the King of *Babylon*.

And when *Babylon* has filled up the measure of her iniquities, it is *the Lord* that raises up *Cyrus*,

Isa. xlv. 4. that *calls him by his name*, that marches forth with his Armies to bring upon her, a swift, sudden, and surprizing desolation. *Can a bird* (saith the

Amos iii. 5. Prophet *Amos*) *fall in a snare upon the earth where no gin is laid for him? And shall there be any evil in the City which the Lord hath not done?* It is God, and not the Air, the Elements, or the Stars, that brings

brings the Famine or Peſtilence upon a Nation. It is God, and not man, whether he be the Foreign Enemy, or the Domeſtick Rebel that overturns a State, and diſſolves a Kingdom.

Theſe inſtances are ſufficient to evince the Divine efficiency in the works of ſecond Cauſes. And if the infidel notwithſtanding will not be ſatisfied in the Doctrine of a Providence, we muſt even leave him to be convinced (as he certainly will either in this life or in another) by Gods own immediate ſtroke. This in the mean time is certain, that this prodigious humour of Atheiſm, Scepticiſm, and Infidelity, which ſo abounds in this Nation, is both a real cauſe of mens impenitency under Judgments, and a dreadful ſymptom, that God will go on to judg and afflict them ſtill. And by this means (I greatly fear) our adverſaries of *Rome* are more likely to compaſs their ends upon us than by any of their other artifices, and ſtratagems whatſoever.

II. There is a great indifferency upon the ſpirits of men, as to the truth or honeſty of the Cauſe that they are engaged in. Which makes them inſtead of thinking of the proper expedients to ſave their Country from ruine, to plot and contrive how they may advance themſelves in the next turn of affairs, and the revolution of the Government.

Men

Men that have been used to fish in troubled waters, and by little tricks and devices of their own to wind themselves in with that side that gets uppermost, will never in any National calamity entertain any thoughts of returning unto God, as long as they can have recourse to the same arts to save and secure themselves.

And this seems to be the Case of *Ephraim* in the Text. He stood in no great fear of the *Assyrian*, because he had no concern for his God, and was not at all sensible of his misery in being carried away Captive into a Land of Idols, as long as he was already prepared to worship after *the manner of the gods of the Land.* Thus we find the people were in the time of *Ahab*, when they *halted between, two opinions* between *God and Baal.* Such were those Nations whom the King of *Assyria* placed in the Cities of *Samaria*, *that feared the Lord and served Idols.* And the *Jews* in the Prophet *Zephany* who could *swear by God, and swear by* Melchom. Such as these are men ready and prepared for a change, whatever it be, and resolved if the King of *Babylon* (or whoever else) get the upper hand, that Idolatry and Superstition shall put no stop to their preferment. Men that can counterfeit any Religion are really of none at all. And therefore whatever pretences they may make for the present, what is there that can hinder them (when occasion serves) from making

2 Kings xviii. 21.

xvii. 33.

Zeph. i. 5.

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the best advantages they can for themselves, by coupling in with that side, that wins the day.

But however such as these by their arts and disguises may make a shift for a while, yet *God will not be mocked.* The time will certainly come, when *the sinners in* Sion *shall be afraid, when fear shall surprise the Hypocrites.* And perhaps it may be no lessening of their miseries, that they are the men to be destroyed last.

The *Gnosticks* in the Primitive Church, were a sort of Hereticks, who profest the name of Christians, and yet held it lawful to Apostatize in time of danger, and comply with the *Jews* for fear of Persecution. But when the days of vengeance, and visitation came, God makes a distinction between those Carnal pretenders, and such as continued stedfast to the profession of his Truth. He provides a *Pella* for the *Christians*, a hiding place for them to retire to in that *day of the Lords anger*, but leaves those abominable Hereticks to be destroyed with the Crucifiers of Christ, and *Hypocrites* to perish with *Unbelievers.* And this is laid by some to be the accomplishment of that prediction of our Saviour, *He that will save his life shall lose it*, when the *Gnostics* who by their compliances expected shelter among *the Jews* were together with *them* so *signally* involved in the same ruin.

Remember (I beseech you) what the *Israelites* got by this double dealing with their God, by all their

their Politick Confederacies with *Ægypt*, and *Assyria*, and at last determine what you will stand to (whatever comes on't) Resolve with
1 Mac. ii. 22. *Mattathias* in the Book of *Macchabees*. *God forbid we should forsake the Law and the Ordinances; We will not hearken to go from our Religion either on the right hand or on the left.* I speak to wise men, *Judg ye what I say.*

III. There are a third sort of men among us, who though they acknowledg God to be the Author of our calamities, and iniquity to deserve them, yet hinder themselves from true Repentance as much by a stiff Zeal for their several Parties, as others do by their lukewarmness and indifferency to them all. It was a strangely confident presumption in the *Jews*, that they thought themselves wholly unconcerned in the event of Gods Judgments, and trusted in lying words, saying,
Jer. vii. 4. *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these.* The same *Jewish* conceits at this day does a fond *Enthusiasm* nourish in the hearts of men: Which inclines them only to censure others as the causes of our miseries, how loud soever Gods Judgments call upon them to accuse, and condemn themselves.

The Fanaticks impute our sufferings to the Restoration of the King, the resettlement of the *Church*, and to the throwing down of the Godly party from their unjust and arbitrary Dominion.

And

And this makes them look upon all publick diſtractions, as deſigned on purpoſe to make way for them to return to their beloved Tyranny and Uſurpation. And have not others better grounds to reply that God is now making inquiſition for blood, and that the murder of our late Soveraign is required, and viſited upon this preſent Generation?

The Diſſenter makes loud out-cries againſt us, that there is ſo much Will-worſhip and Superſtition practiſed in our Church, that Popery when it comes, is very likely to meet with a ready entertainment without any conſiderable oppoſition. And have not we far juſter reaſon to recriminate upon them, that their uncharitable Diviſions keeping up the intereſts of their ſeveral parties, their refuſal of compliance in ſuch things as by their own acknowledgment they may lawfully ſubmit to, and making offences of things indifferent, which the word of God has never declared to be ſo, have ſo far weakned the Proteſtant Intereſt, as to give incouragement to the Papiſts in their preſent attempts againſt us, and our Religion?

But ſurely (which ſide ſoever be in the right) this is not the true method to ſecure us from our fears, or to prevent our dangers. Let us aſſure ourſelves, that no conceited priviledges will protect us in our ſins from the wrath of God. *You*

Amos iii. 2. *only have I known* (says God) *of all the Families of the earth.* It does not follow, and therefore you will I spare, but *therefore you will I punish for your iniquities.* In the mean time this bold, and censorious charging of others is the ready way to draw down Gods Judgments upon us both. And if we would all agree to be severe in judging of ourselves, we should be a great deal nearer to Peace and Union with one another.

These are some causes of our obstinacy under Gods Judgments. It remains that I speak a word or two concerning the greatness of the provocation together with some brief Application to ourselves.

And indeed what can possibly be imagined of a more daring and provoking Nature than this? What can a people do more to incense the God of Heaven, and cause his anger to smoak against such a stubborn Generation? It directly flies in the face of the Divine Majesty, and casts an intolerable slur upon all his excellent perfections. It tramples upon his Justice, crosses and thwarts the designs of his Mercy. It baffles his Goodness, and defeats the ends of his most unsearchable Wisdom. It affronts his absolute and uncontrollable Dominion, as if he wanted Authority sufficient to vindicate the reputation of his Laws. It defies and braves his Power, as if

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man were able to contend with his Maker, as if Omnipotence had done its worſt, were quite ſpent, and had no other Judgments in ſtore to vex and conſume a ſinful people.

This is certainly the true intent and meaning of every obſtinate ſinners language, who continues incorrigible under the Divine Judgments. And then what can be expected, but, ſince men thus rob God of his Honor by their impenitence, that he ſhould at laſt aſſert, and vindicate it by the juſt retaliation of wrath and vengeance? He will infallibly *get honor upon* Pharaoh *and all his hoſt*, and make a people that have defamed him to be a *by-word and reproach among the Nations*. It is ſaid of King Ahaz, *that in the time of his diſtreſs, he treſpaſſed yet more.* But God ſets a mark upon him: *This is that King* Ahaz. He points him out with a ſpecial brand of reproach and ignominy for an example, and warning to all future Generations. 2 Chronicl. xxviii. 22.

We read, *Jer.* v. 3. *O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou haſt ſmitten, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed to return.* And then God proceeds to denounce further Judgments, till it follows, v. 7. *How ſhall I pardon thee for this?* There is certainly a deſperate malignity in that guilt, at which Divine Wiſdom

seems at a stand; which has (as it were) exhausted the riches of his Goodness, non-plust and posed him, who is infinite in Mercy, to contrive and find out a pardon.

And how terrible the wrath of the Lord is, when it is once kindled against an impenitent and obdurate Nation, we have a lively instance in his proceedings with the *Jews*, when he could bear with them no longer, when he quite cut them off from being a people, when they had filled up the measure of their Fathers, and when God visited upon them, together with the blood of Christ, all the innocent blood that had been spilt, *from the blood of righteous* Abel *to the blood of* Zacharias *the son of* Barachias, *who was slain between the Temple and Altar.* A visitation so dreadful and astonishing, as if God designed in their destruction to shew an experiment what an Almighty Arm was able to do, what desolations he could bring upon a Land for the wickedness of those that dwell therein.

Though *in* Jury *God was known, and his name was great in* Israel; though *of the Temple at* Jerusalem *God had said, that he would put his name there, and that his eyes and his heart should be there perpetually*; yet he now wonderfully declares to the whole world, that *Jerusalem* is no longer the place of his rest, that he has forsook his Footstool, abhorred his Sanctuary, and cast off his Altar.

Altar. If I had now time to pursue all the fatal circumstances of that dreadful story, what incredible numbers most miserably perisht by the Pestilence, and the Famine, how many were destroyed by the *Roman* Armies, and (which was yet more tragical, and frightful) how many became the executioners of Gods vengeance upon themselves, and how visibly the hand of God appeared in all; we should quickly conclude it to be the most fearful calamity, that was ever executed upon a people on this side Hell, so that nothing but the day of Judgment can give us a resemblance of the horror of it. Upon this occasion we may fitly use the words of the Prophet Daniel, *Under the whole heavens has not been done, as has been done upon* Jerusalem. Dan. ix. 12.

I have no design to make any Application of this fearful story to our selves. We have not yet had the voice in the Temple, the terrible Earthquake, or the flaming Sword, and from these late discoveries that have been made amongst us, we have some reason to hope that our destruction is not so near. But though we have no Commission to forebode destruction, yet we have loud Alarms to provide against it. And if our impenitence under Gods Judgments continue at the same rate with theirs, what can we otherwise expect, but that we shall also perish in the like dreadful desolation?

I cannot here pretend to describe the successive advances of afflicting Providences, which God Almighty hath sent upon this unfortunate Generation. How fatal were the miseries of the Civil war! How sad and dismal the confusions, that succeeded it! We heard nothing among us but the cries of the oppressed, the confused *noise of the Battel, of the warrier, and garments rould in blood.* But after we had been long exercised with this severe discipline, God at length turns our Captivity, brings back our Royal Sovereign to sit upon the Throne of his Fathers, and establishes the whole Nation in a full possession of their Rights, and Laws, their Liberties, and Religion. And (which ought the more to endear our deliverance) all this was brought about by a Miracle of Mercy far beyond all our hopes and contrivances, at a time, when we were quite lost, without all visible means of a Restoration.

And now what ought have been the Natural result of this? What language could have been more suitable for a redeemed people, than those words of Ezra, *Seeing thou hast punisht us less than our iniquities have deserved, and hast given us such a deliverance as this, shall we again break thy Commandments?* But lo! thus has it come to pass, by a prodigy of Ingratitude more astonishing than the Mercy, that we have again provoked the Lord to take the Sword into his Hand, to Commissi-

Ezra ix. 14, 15.

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on his deſtroying Angel to bring the Peſtilence into our Streets, to ſend upon us a raging and devouring Fire, which laid waſt the Metropolis of the Kingdom. Together with theſe Calamities, he raiſes up againſt us a Foreign Enemy to make war upon our Coaſts, *to ſcoff at Kings, and make Princes a ſcorn unto them*, to break our chains, *deride our ſtrong holds*, and *gather our captivity as the ſands.* Hab. i. 10.

And ever ſince that time, we have continued under the ſad apprehenſions of more fearful Judgments than theſe. There has remained upon the Nation great *diſtreſs and perplexity*, *mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things that are coming upon the earth.* Luke xxi. 25. We have long ſtood in fear of a Famine of the Word, of the removal of the Candleſtick, of the glory of God in his Church ready to depart from us. To be plain, and in a word, we are threatned with the return of *Popery* upon the Kingdom, that is, to have the practice of the groſſeſt Impiety, Superſtition, and Idolatry introduced among us, and all the ſincere profeſſors of the Truth of the Goſpel in every corner of the Land Maſſacred, Burnt, Rackt and Tormented, becauſe they will not receive the *mark of the beaſt in their forehead*, nor comply with theſe abominations.

This is the Sword which the Lord ſeems to hang over us this day. And is there any way left to pre-

prevent, or ſtop it from the intended execution? If inſtead of our gratitude to God for ſuch ſignal mercies, as he has reacht forth unto us, we begin to fret and murmur at our enjoyments, and are ready to make us a *Captain to return into Ægypt*, is it not Juſt with God to cauſe *Ægypt* to return to us, and enſlave both King and People to the mercileſs Uſurpation of a Foreign Power? If after we have ſo long lived under a Faithful Preaching of the Word, a ſincere Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, a liberal proviſion of all the means of Grace, we have loathed our *Manna* and deſpiſed our Mercies, if we have either quite withdrawn from the Publick Aſſemblies, or not brought forth fruit in any wiſe anſwerable to thoſe great advantages, which we have, of being ſaved; may we not reaſonably preſume, that we have ſo far provoked the Lord, as to give us up to a people, who will deprive us of theſe bleſſings, who with the cruelty of *Dioclesian* will kindle a Fire either for our Bibles, or our Selves, who inſtead of the word of God will obtrude upon us their own inventions, rob us of one half of the bleſſed Sacrament, and ſet up the Idol of the Maſs inſtead of the other? *If we have not received the love of the truth that we might be ſaved*: Is it not greatly to be feared *that for this cauſe God will ſend us ſtrong deluſions, that we ſhall believe lies; that all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs?*

2 Theſ. ii. 10, 11, 12.

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If after all those mixtures and vicissitudes of Providence that we have had (as *Salvian* says of the Spaniards, *Mutata fors sed non mutata vitiositas*) there remains still the same senslesness under Gods Judgments, the same unthankfulness for his Mercies, the same Atheism, Prophaneness and Infidelity, from which God by all this variety of his methods has indeavoured to reclaim us: If the Nation is full of Whoredoms, and *because of swearing the Land mourneth*: If Treason dares appear with an open Face, and spread dayly Libels, and Defamations against the Government: If Schisms and Factions thrive and prosper, and again threaten the best of Churches in the world: surely God will visit for these things, his soul will yet further *be avenged upon such a Nation as this.* May we not justly fear that God will raise up against us a bitter, *and hasty Nation to land upon our Coasts, to march through the breadth of the Land, and possess the dwelling places that are not theirs*; that he will henceforth forget to be gracious, and shut up his loving kindness in an utter displeasure, that he will bring upon us that heavy doom which our Saviour of old denounced to his own people, *Therefore I say unto you, that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits of it.* Matth. xxi. 43.

I know but one way left to prevent the approach of these dreadful Judgments, which is,

ſeriouſly to put in practice that great duty which we are called to this day, *to repent and turn from our tranſgreſſions, that ſo iniquity may not be our ruine.* This is the only courſe left us to reſcue us from our preſent miſeries, and preſerve us from the evil, which is otherwiſe certainly to come upon us. And how great ſoever our fears are, we have yet ſome comfortable grounds to hope, that our day of Grace is not yet paſt, the door is not ſhut againſt us, but that we are ſtill within the poſſibilities of Repentance. It ſeems that we are not yet quite caſt off, by that wonderful diſcovery which God hath made amongſt us of a Helliſh Plot for the Aſſaſſinating of our King, and the Subverſion of our Government and Religion. And therefore though we might be apt to conclude with *Manoah* in the Book of *Judges. We ſhall ſurely die, becauſe we have ſeen God,* ſo terrible in his Judgments in the midſt of us? Yet we may now with *Manoahs* wife make a better and more reaſonable inference: *If the Lord were pleaſed to kill us, he would not have ſhewed us all theſe things, nor would he (as at this time) have told us ſuch things as theſe.*

Judg. xiii. 22, 23.

Let us be careful therefore to improve this ſignal Providence to thoſe ſerious purpoſes, for which God intends it, which are to break off our ſins by Repentance, to reform and amend our lives: Leſt by continuing in our tranſgreſſions,

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we defeat the deſigns of his goodneſs, and hinder him from going on to compleat our deliverance: Leſt this great Mercy prove but a lightning before death, and notwithſtanding this, *if we ſtill do wickedly, we be conſumed, both we, and our King.*

So that (we ſee) a way ſtill lies open for us to appeaſe the wrath of God and procure his favor; which if we all ſincerely reſolve to walk in, he will ſhine upon your Counſels, bleſs your Enterprizes, and proſper your Undertakings; he will be a wall of fire round about us, when he is thus the glory in the midſt of us, he will heal our back-ſlidings and make up our breaches, he will defeat the deſigns of the enemies of our Peace, *and he will remember the Land.*

FINIS.